



# COUNCILMEMBER SHERRI S. LIGHTNER

CITY OF SAN DIEGO – COUNCIL DISTRICT 1

## Press Release

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### **Lightner Works to Increase Graywater Usage** *New policies would create incentives and streamline regulations*

SAN DIEGO – Councilmember Sherri Lightner today proposed sweeping changes to the city’s graywater policies to encourage San Diegans to install graywater systems to help conserve water and save money.

Graywater systems, widely used in cities like Santa Barbara and Phoenix, allow untreated wastewater from a home’s washing machines, bathtubs, showers and sinks to be recycled on-site for such uses as outdoor irrigation. In a pilot project, the City of Los Angeles found that graywater reuse has the potential to reduce a household’s water use by as much as 50 percent.

Currently, the City of San Diego has unclear and contradictory rules regarding graywater, which has inhibited the use of graywater systems. To increase the use of graywater systems, Lightner made the following recommendations at the Council’s Natural Resources and Culture Committee meeting today:

- Create a “No Permit Policy” to include all simple graywater systems that discharge less than 250 gallons a day.
- Move the oversight of simple graywater systems from the purview of the city’s Development Services Department to the Public Utilities Department to eliminate fees and improve accountability.
- Develop an outreach and education campaign, which would include a comprehensive guide to graywater systems.
- Establish a rebate program for those who want to install larger, more complex graywater systems, reimbursing up to one-third of all permitting costs.
- Explore incentives for developers to include “graywater-ready” plumbing for all new residential construction.

“These simple policy changes would not only cut red tape but encourage water recycling and help San Diego conserve more water,” Lightner said. “Saving water isn’t just the right thing to do. It’s also the smart thing to do because the less water we use, the less reliant San Diego will be on costly imported water.”

Councilmember David Alvarez, chair of the Natural Resources and Culture Committee, applauded Lightner's proposals, saying that they are an important step in San Diego seizing control of its water destiny.

"These are simple, common sense recommendations that will give our community additional tools to save water and money," said Alvarez. "I'm grateful that my colleague has brought forward these recommendations and look forward to seeing them implemented."

The Committee referred the recommendations to the Water Policy Task Force for vetting and asked the group to provide their input so the City Council can quickly act on the proposals.

The Water Policy Task Force is the result of Councilmember Lightner's Comprehensive Water Policy and has been charged with developing an action plan to ensure San Diego has an affordable and sustainable water supply. It is slated to provide a final report by June 2013 but can act on policy issues as they arise.

*Sherri Lightner is the Councilmember for Council District One of the City of San Diego, which includes the communities of Black Mountain Ranch, Carmel Valley, Del Mar Mesa, La Jolla, Pacific Highlands Ranch, Rancho Peñasquitos, Torrey Hills, Torrey Highlands, Torrey Pines, and University City. She took office December 8, 2008.*

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